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15. Abstract: A changing security environment, including the rise of asymmetric trans-national threats, and other internal impacts has reduced the effectiveness of the theater command and control structure. The organization of the combatant command and reliance on ad hoc JTFs does not allow US forces to react rapidly and decisively at the critical stages prior to and at the inception of crisis. A new emphasis on battle staff organization is required to seize control of the “begin state” and impose full-spectrum dominance upon the adversary prior to crisis escalation. Essential to success: 1. Reorganizing the combatant command staff to reflect its functional responsibilities: operations (free planners from other responsibilities to focus solely on operations—at standing JTF within the organization), plans and policy (chart the future and exercise and equip forces to face those challenges, and garrison activities (take care of the force to ensure battle focus). 2. Focusing theater engagement by establishing standing JSOTFs over culturally and geographically determined sub-regions. Key to accomplishing the desired end state is seamless integration of JSOTF and combatant command COPs, forward presence of US forces through the use of SOF “global scouts,” and robust training of battle staff personnel in the disciplines of operational art and mission planning, rehearsal, and execution tools.			
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Shaping the Begin State: Building a More Responsive Combatant Command

By

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A paper submitted to the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College of the Department of the Navy.

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The United States now faces a world in which adversaries will attack with little or no warning, and in which our ability to deploy major forces to a theater in crisis will be constrained by politics, geography and adversary employment of anti-access capabilities--ballistic and land-attack cruise missiles, terrorism, diesel submarines, anti-ship cruise missiles, sea mines, and weapons of mass effects. We can no longer plan on having months or even weeks to deploy massive theater forces into a region rich in unthreatened infrastructure. Instead, we must plan to engage in the first hours of a crisis with those capabilities that can be brought to bear quickly, informed by intimate knowledge of the adversary and focused on those objectives most likely to produce the desired effects. This new American way of war, especially when enabled by forces optimized to its requirements, will enhance our national security in the 21st century.¹

In the coming years the regional combatant commanders will face new and unprecedented challenges as unstable nation-states fail and asymmetric threats such as minor rogue states with weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or non state actors such as al Qaeda threaten US interests within the homeland and overseas. While the proliferation and pace of information technology quickens, combatant commanders will be hard pressed to maximize effectiveness not only by efficiently integrating intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) tools into operational planning and execution, but also by finding and fixing an elusive enemy that will become increasingly more savvy at employing technology to hide and deceive their intentions. In addition, they will operate in a much more “transparent” battle space that makes security and surprise much more difficult to achieve.

Unfortunately, the current staff organization and functions of the historical five regional combatant commands (now augmented by the creation of NORTHCOM) are relics of the Cold War. Originally formed to provide interoperable joint forces to fight major theater wars, they are no longer optimally organized to counter the emerging threat. Their large size and broad areas of responsibility (AOR) make the organizations slow to act, often

¹ US Joint Forces Command. Rapid Decisive Operations. (Norfolk, VA), 1.

putting US forces at an initial disadvantage that must be overcome through national strategic diplomacy (basing rights, coalition building) or risky tactical operational successes (employing the 82d Airborne Division as a "line in the sand" during Operation Desert Shield). In a global environment that requires a microscope to find and fix the threat and a scalpel to remove it, the combatant commands in their current configuration are neither.

The question arises: what is the best way to organize the regional combatant commands to accomplish new and legacy tasks, defeat the threat, and minimize the expenditure of precious resources? The answer is twofold: restructure the theater staff to keenly focus "go to war" requirements while meeting other unified command responsibilities and create standing joint special operations task forces (JSOTF) within the AOR that are operationally and culturally aware of a specific sub-region. It is the JSOTF interacting with a functionally organized combatant command that will provide the combatant commander a robust capability to operationally prepare the battlefield prior to crisis and allow him to defeat the threat decisively, mitigate its impact, or prevent it from ever happening. These specialized and focused staffs will interoperate with an operationally oriented combatant command staff and leverage emerging technologies to "shape the begin state"; that is, provide US commanders with a new level of pre-crisis operational speed, giving them the flexibility to act quickly and decisively.

The need for change is based on the most likely threat: a conventionally weak force, belonging either to a state or a non-state actor, achieving a high payoff by employing asymmetric means. Continued reliance on large conventional force organizations and their associated staffs allows the smaller adversary to move within our decision cycle and set the operational tempo. Much like the Viet Cong guerrilla, al Qaeda operatives can become

operational, execute their mission, and disappear more quickly than US commanders can orient, observe, decide, and act (OODA).

The US Central Command (USCENTCOM) is the illustrative example throughout this study. In general terms however, the arguments for change and the proposed solutions are valid for all the combatant commands. Key to understanding the need for change is an analysis of why the current structure fails. Subsequent sections will present a new organizational construct intended to provide the combatant commander with an unprecedented ability to shape his AOR and decisively engage all threats across the operational spectrum.

Why the Combatant Commands Cannot Control the Battlespace Under the Status Quo

The Shortcomings of the Current J-Staff Model

There are two reasons why the combatant commands are becoming less efficient and ultimately less effective at all echelons of operational command and control (C^2): non-war fighting responsibilities and the challenges posed by asymmetric threats. While the former factor is largely due to the evolution of organizations over time, the latter factor represents a departure from the status quo and will ultimately drive the way the combatant commanders approach the Global War on Terror while accomplishing their more traditional “legacy” tasks.

An unnamed former Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) Commanding General once commented: “I’d like to just take 50 guys from here, move down the street, and

start all over."² His frustration was not directed at the quality of the organization, but rather at the quantity of tasks levied upon it by higher echelons and the subsequent growth in personnel required to accomplish new and decidedly non-operational missions. In its twenty years of existence, USCENTCOM has undergone similar growing pains, morphing into an organization that appears to be a hybrid of a large, diverse service command and a lean, focused battle staff. In fact, USCENTCOM has grown into an organization of almost 1,000 personnel.³

USCENTCOM's theater strategy is based on three tenets: focused shaping, selective response, and sustained preparation.⁴ While the first two pillars are clearly operational tasks for a battle staff, "sustained preparation" has many decidedly force provider like characteristics such as "Force Structure, Force Modernization, Infrastructure Development, Resources, Assessments...Joint Experimentation, ACTDs [Advanced Concept Technology Demonstrations], Joint Test & Evaluation, Joint Doctrine, and Joint Vision 2020...."⁵

It is important to note that these tasks are the way war fighting combatant commanders and their subordinate service components articulate their force structure and materiel requirements to the services. However, the effort involved in accomplishing these actions impacts all staff directorates at the combatant and component command levels and distracts operational planners from current operations. This is the primary reason why personnel growth at operational staffs does not translate into additional operational capability. For example, JSOC, a sub-unified command under the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), now employs twice as many people to execute facilities

² Joint Special Operations Command, Leaving the Flatlands (Fort Bragg, NC), 35.

³ US Central Command, <www.centcom.mil/aboutus/areaof.htm>, 1.

⁴ US Central Command, Theater Engagement Plan Strategic Concept (FY 02-04) (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: 1 April 2001), 2.

management functions than were assigned to the J3 when the command was established in 1980.⁶ More telling is the constant requirement for operational planners to validate exercise scenarios, review joint special operations forces (SOF) materiel requirements, and manage budgets.

Statutory requirements and federal acquisition regulations are responsible for much of the additional workload and are not going to go away, so the current model must evolve to accomplish legacy and emerging missions. In fact, rapid technological advances and interoperability issues will most likely increase the frequency of personnel-draining activities such as ACTDs and joint testing and evaluation. Yet the basic organization of the staffs has not changed despite the fact that they are now responsible for three general areas of emphasis or function: joint operations, concept and force validation, and garrison/infrastructure.

The inefficiencies are created in the existing organization because all elements of the current J-staff model (J1-J8) must monitor and execute tasks from all three functions. Operational planners often perform force validation tasks in addition to primary duties, communicators must be conversant in deployable and garrison/fixed based communications and automation, and financial planners must manage exercise budgets and operational funds in addition to ensuring that quality of life issues are attended to. This diverse set of tasks requires close coordination with the majority of the other staff directorates, all of which are focused on meeting current operational requirements.

The Sub-Region Geography and Assigned Responsibility.

USCENTCOM has divided its AOR into four distinct sub-regions “in order to recognize their distinct differences, and to focus staff and component efforts to identify areas

⁵ Ibid., 4.

⁶ Joint Special Operations Command, 15.

for mutual cooperation and leverage engagement opportunities.” These areas include: Arabian Peninsula and Iraq, Northern Red Sea, South and Central Asia, and Horn of Africa.⁷ While these sub-regions are logically created along geographic and cultural lines, the assignment of “focus” countries within the sub-regions to service component commanders does not support the objective of full theater presence. In essence, USCENTCOM assigns countries to the four service component commanders to “ensure each country receives consideration for planning and execution of engagement activities”, and “help identify possible seams in our Theater Engagement Plan (TEP).”⁸ However, USCENTCOM assigns nations to the service component commanders based on “their inherent service strengths,” not the geographic or cultural boundaries established by the sub-regions. This fragmentation of logically arrayed regions may adversely affect operations directed against transnational threats that do not respect borders or the rule of law.

The Reliance on Slow-Moving, High Signature Ad Hoc Planning Staffs.

“Combatant commanders may directly control the conduct of military operations or may delegate that authority and responsibility to a subordinate commander.”⁹ The combatant commander has several options available when delegating operations. He can establish subordinate unified commands (sub-unified commands), functional commands, and joint task forces (JTF). All the combatant commands have established sub-unified commands for SOF known as theater special operations commands (TSOC). In addition, several theaters have standing JTFs such as USCENTCOM’s JTF-Southwest Asia (JTF-SWA) that is tasked to conduct Operation Southern Watch in support of United Nations (UN) resolutions.

⁷ US Central Command, Theater Engagement Plan Strategic Concept (FY 02-04), 5.

⁸ Ibid., 22.

⁹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Operations, Joint Pub 3-0 (Washington, DC: 10 September 2001), II-12.

The JTF is usually the force of choice established by the combatant commander to execute military operations other than war (MOOTW) or to contain and successfully resolve small-scale contingencies (SSC). They are established on a geographical area or functional basis when the mission has a specific limited objective.¹⁰ Within MOOTW there are two distinct categories of operational characteristics: no notice crises (SSCs) or long duration operations. The creation of a JTF is an effective way to accomplish operational objectives for those longer duration MOOTW activities that afford the joint force commander additional time to perform his initial OODA functions. Examples of such operations are: peacekeeping/peace enforcement/peace building, counter drug, counter insurgency, and domestic support operations.¹¹ Because of the political overtones associated with these types of MOOTW operations, the joint force commander's operational preparation and orientation to the task usually outpaces strategic decision-making. Regardless, achieving rapid and decisive success in such operations is not likely and therefore does not require a fully functioning OODA cycle at the onset of the operation.

However, SSC MOOTW operations often move at an operational speed that Joint Force Commanders cannot match, at least not initially. These types of operations include: non-combatant evacuation operations (NEO), strikes, raids, shows of force, counter terrorism (CT), and disaster relief.¹² While some of these potential MOOTW operations are considered during the deliberate planning process (NEO, disaster relief) or may be flexible deterrent options (FDO) available to the joint force commander, all will require some degree of crisis action planning based on the threat, time, troops available, and geographic location. USCENTCOM acknowledges this environment by stating: "several nations face chronic

¹⁰ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine Encyclopedia, (Washington, DC: 16 July 1997), 442.

¹¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Operations, I-2.

internal instability and turmoil that provide fertile ground for terrorism and separatism.

Weapons proliferation and technology transfers have created a dangerous and unpredictable military environment difficult to contain."¹³

The fluid nature of the AOR demonstrates that *ad hoc* JTFs will not be able to match an adversary's speed at the onset of crisis. A JTF formed to react to a crisis will be ineffective in accomplishing several doctrinal tasks before combat: detailed preparation of the operational area, isolation of the enemy, and the control of space.¹⁴ A more important but overlooked factor may be that of time. An *ad hoc* organization will be at an immediate disadvantage in its ability to complete its first OODA cycle, with the greatest friction points occurring during the orient and observe phases. There are two primary reasons for this: a “come as you are” methodology for establishing the joint force staff (which creates organizations with unqualified personnel) and the growing complexity required to plan and execute operations through the use of high-technology operational management tools (which requires personnel with technical skill sets).

Unqualified Personnel. *Ad hoc* JTFs are assemblages of military officers and non-commissioned officers and civilians from various government agencies, all with varying degrees of professional education and joint experience. Many are often tasked to join an operational staff from geographically dispersed tactical level organizations, bringing with them little useable operational knowledge of the AOR or joint area of operations (JOA). Many have little or no experience in dealing with other government agencies (OGA), non-governmental organizations (NGO), or an aggressive media. They are a major friction point in establishing an effective joint staff that quickly orients and observes and are a large part of

¹² Ibid.

¹³ US Central Command, Theater Engagement Plan (Unclassified Draft) (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: n.d.), 5.

why “JTFs require too much time to ‘spin up’ and can even sit (only) partially staffed when a war is over.”¹⁵

This observation was seen in action during Operation Enduring Freedom when USCENTCOM attempted to establish a JSOTF in southern Afghanistan with mixed results. C² issues were problematic from the beginning, asset allocation was inefficient, and staff personnel were not qualified to plan and execute operations at the operational level. Personnel assigned to the JSOTF staff were aware of joint training initiatives within USSOCOM and Joint Forces Command (JFCOM), but were unable to leverage these resources because of the contingency nature of the operation.¹⁶ In the end, JSOTF-South was unable to become operationally effective rapidly, never gained dominance of the OODA loop, and consequently never executed decisive operations.

Technical Skills Requirements. Information technology has created highly complex and dynamic operations and intelligence centers, personnel tracking tools, and logistics management systems employing unique communications and software/hardware tools that require extensive training. At a recent simulation exercise named Global Wargame 2000, a joint staff was formed from various geographic locations to employ and evaluate collaborative data tools and common operating picture (COP) software. Interestingly, the COP tools presented two problems during the exercise: those who were not proficient at operating the software despite extensive pre-exercise training never gained the situational awareness of their functional area to contribute effectively to the big picture. On the other

¹⁴Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Operations, IV-1.

¹⁵ “Pentagon Experiment Heats Up to Test New Concepts in Warfighting,” 1 August 2001, <<http://www.Dia.smil.mil/ADMIN/EARLYBIRD/020801/e20020801pentagon.htm>>, [16 January 2003], 1.

¹⁶ “Joint Doctrine JSOTF Planning and Background of Available Staff,” Lessons Learned No. 30539-67207, 28 February 2002. Unclassified. SOCCENT, Available at <<http://recluse.centcom.smil.mil/jullssearch>> MacDill Air Force Base, FL: Special Operations Command Central, February 2002, UNCLASSIFIED.

hand, those exercise participants who were competent users of the tools often overwhelmed themselves with excess information and became ineffective as well.¹⁷ The lesson learned from the exercise is that operational staffs will employ increasingly complex technologies to track and manage the battle. To be effective, these staffs must train intensively initially, followed by continuous use and sustainment training. Clearly this capability cannot be maintained through the creation of *ad hoc* organizations.

Organizing the Theater for Success: a Staff Model to Create Operational Speed

Creating the optimal organization within the combatant commands involves restructuring from the top (the headquarters) to the bottom (the sub-regions) to create an organization that can accomplish all assigned missions across the operational continuum. The two keys to success are: establishing a theater-level C² structure that capitalizes on the strengths of flexible JTFs and assigning sub-region responsibility to SOF forces in the form of standing JSOTFs.

Creating a New J-Staff Construct: The Functional Model.

The solution to re-focusing AOR operational planners, eliminating staff “stovepipes,” and creating a command that looks into the future while effectively operating in the present is to model the staff after the three operational functions: joint operations, concept and force validation, and garrison/infrastructure.¹⁸ The result is a focused three directorate organization that accomplishes all unified command responsibilities: planning and

¹⁷ Hutchins, Susan G., William G. Kemple, John A. Poirier, and Susan Hocevar, “Use of a Novel Organizational Structure to Support Complex Decisionmaking During Global Wargame 2000,” (Unpublished Research Paper, Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey, CA: n.d.), 5-7.

conducting military operations, maintaining preparedness to carry out assigned missions, communicating service issues to service chiefs, and keeping the Joint Chiefs of Staff informed of activities in the AOR.¹⁹

The Garrison Command Directorate is responsible for garrison and fixed-base infrastructure issues. Garrison functions would include budget and resource execution, garrison contracting, facility management, physical security of fixed bases, personnel and finance services, and central issue. This directorate would integrate garrison functions from the J1, J2, J4, J6, and J8 under a single staff director to ensure focused garrison support for the command and separating the operational functions of personnel management, physical security, logistics, communications, and finance from their garrison counterparts. The Garrison Command Directorate would fulfill the third element of USCENTOM's mission: "prepare our command and families for the challenges and opportunities of an uncertain future" and "improve the quality of life of USCENTCOM personnel both at home station and in the AOR".²⁰

The Plans and Policy Directorate is the unified command's "lighthouse to the future", responsible for concept and force validation and providing the command's vision for long-term theater-strategic objectives as well as interfacing with the Services to ensure joint interoperability, technology insertion, and exercise management. The directorate manages the combatant command's plans development and Theater Strategic Capabilities Plan, designs an exercise program and engagement plan, and manages all resource programming actions to ensure theater requirements are articulated to the services and validated through

¹⁸ Note: The discussion of the staff construct is limited to the combatant command. However, it may be an effective way for the service components to organize to meet service and joint force requirements.

¹⁹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine Encyclopedia, 718.

joint training in a realistic threat environment. It develops and updates operations, contingency, and functional plans and establishes relationships with embassy staffs through the liberal employment of highly trained liaisons. The Plans and Policy Directorate tasks include all three elements of the USCENTCOM mission articulated in the Theater Engagement Plan Strategic Concept: focused shaping, selective response, and sustained preparation.

Focused Shaping: Prevent the proliferation of WMD and assist regional partners. Control the transfer of sensitive/destabilizing information and technology. Promote and strengthen collective and cooperative security and defense relationships.
Selective Response: Develop a suite of operational and contingency plans along with the supporting “battle rhythms” to respond to the full spectrum of military operations.
Sustained Preparation: Contribute to the development of joint doctrine and tactics, techniques, and procedures and provide an environment for joint experimentation and test and evaluation. Develop and improve staff organization and processes. Improve USCENTCOM’s interface with outside agencies such as OSD, Joint Staff, other combatant commanders, and services.²¹

Management of AOR exercises is a key component of the Plans and Policy Directorate’s mission and vital to the execution of a combatant commander’s Exercise Campaign Plan, which included ninety planned exercises in fiscal year 2001 in the US CENTCOM AOR.²² The three stated objectives of the USCENTCOM Joint and Combined Exercise Program are: enhance USCENTCOM’s war fighting capability through maintaining combat readiness, enhance interoperability during combined operations, and maintain access and presence in the AOR.²³ The final objective is perhaps the most important, for it is a critical element in maintaining AOR orientation and observation during times of peace to better shape the begin state for potential future conflict. Elements of the Plans and Policy

²⁰ US Central Command, US Central Command, Theater Engagement Plan Strategic Concept (FY 02-04), 17-18.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 16-19.

²² US Central Command, Theater Engagement Plan (Unclassified Draft) (MacDill Air Force Base, FL: n.d.), 8.

Directorate are drawn from the J2 (future threat analysis), J4 (logistical concept development), J5 (plans and policy), and J8 (planning, programming, and requirements development).

The Joint Operations Directorate (JOD) is the centerpiece of the combatant command and is responsible for tasks from focused shaping, selective response, and sustained preparation.

Focused Shaping: Attain and maintain access to regional strategic resources, lines of communication, bases, infrastructure and facilities. Deter and combat terrorism and illicit drug trafficking. Foster peaceful resolution of disputes and conflicts.

Selective Response: Remain prepared to fight and win a Major Theater War in the Central region. Remain prepared to respond across the full spectrum of military operations.

Sustained Preparation: Reduce risk to forces and civilian personnel by ensuring safety and force protection are fully integrated into planning and execution. Improve staff interface and daily battle rhythms between USCENTCOM, components, JTFs, and country teams.²⁴

Most importantly, the JOD is responsible for the execution of the theater strategy as defined by the combatant commander. The full-time, operationally focused directorate will provide the commander with the flexibility to either plan and execute operations at the combatant command level, or to establish subordinate unified commands, functional component commands, and JTFs. The JOD is led by a three star general officer, similar to a JTF, and operates in a similar fashion, although it is not limited by the doctrinal scope of JTF authority. It is multifunctional, drawing personnel from J1 (personnel management, medical), J2 (intelligence and imagery analysts, counter-intelligence), J3 (operations (air/ground/maritime/information operations)), J4 (logistics, transportation, contingency

²³ Ibid., 25.

²⁴ US Central Command, US Central Command, Theater Engagement Plan Strategic Concept (FY 02-04), 16-19.

contracting), J6 (deployed communications and automated data processing), and J8 (operational funds).

The centerpiece of the JOD is a technologically advanced Joint Operations Center (JOC) that fuses blue and red force data into one common COP.²⁵ The JOD will operate on a perpetual battle rhythm that provides several advantages over existing C² models. First, it provides for a full-time battle staff unencumbered by external or secondary duties. In essence, it functions as an AOR-wide standing JTF. Secondly, the command makes an investment in newly assigned battle staff officers by intensively training them in JOC operations, COP management, joint doctrine and operational planning before they ever sit on the operational staff. Once trained, individually and collectively the JOD will become the most effective and efficient organization for crisis action planning. Finally, and perhaps the most important consideration when countering trans-national threats such as al Qaeda, daily operation is the command's deception plan. The JOD will not betray operational activity to intelligence collectors because it is always up and running.

Standing JSOTFs: Using the Force of Choice to Win the Global War on Terror.

*"Special operations afford a flexible and precise tool upon which the joint campaign often relies heavily. Special operations may assume a leading role. Special operations can greatly complicate an enemy's defensive plans, and provide unique capabilities for certain high-leverage missions not achievable by other means."*²⁶

SOF presents the combatant commander with a unique and highly skilled joint force that is most effective in MOOTW environments that manifest themselves with political and cultural sensitivities. SOF is the force of choice for executing precision strike operations against high value targets such as terrorist leaders and their camps, safe areas, and sources of

²⁵ Continued innovations in blue and red force tagging using low probability of intercept/detection technologies will enhance operational situational awareness

²⁶ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine Encyclopedia, 737.

revenue. When paired with detailed intelligence and operational preparation of the battlefield, SOF can achieve operational and strategic effects when executing SSCs in a MOOTW environment.

The most effective and efficient way to task organize SOF in the restructured theater concept is to capitalize on the already established sub-regions and apportion and/or assign SOF organizations against them. In the case of US CENTCOM, this would include its four sub-regions: Arabian Peninsula and Iraq, Northern Red Sea, South and Central Asia, and Horn of Africa. To ensure the proper employment of SOF by executing C² within a SOF chain of Command,²⁷ the Commander, US CENTCOM would designate each region a joint special operations area (JSOA) and establish a standing JSOTF over each JSOA.

Each JSOTF would be highly specialized and manned by personnel with unique operational and technical skill sets much like JOD. Data transfer between the JSOTF and JOD common operating picture is critical to the synchronization of the combatant commander's engagement plan from the tactical to theater strategic level of war. Deployed SOF assets acting as "global scouts" will collect information across the operational spectrum as they engage in a variety of SSC and long-lead time MOOTW tasks. This data will feed into the JSOTF COP that will gather and analyze tactical data to develop a COP at the operational level. This data will then feed the combatant commander's COP to greatly enhance theater-wide situational awareness. Conversely, COP feeds from the JOD to the JSOTF will cue the SOF commander to theater indicators and warnings and allow him to rapidly reorient and re-task his forces more quickly than the adversary can react, thus seizing and maintaining control of the OODA loop.

²⁷ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Operations, Joint Pub 3-05 (Washington, DC: 17 April 1998), III-2.

The concept of standing JSOTFs is clearly superior to that of relying on *ad hoc* JTFs or the TSOC, which normally operates with almost three fourths of its personnel coming from the reserves.²⁸ The standing JSOTF is the ideal SOF C² construct for a variety of reasons.

The regional apportionment of SOF organizations and the forward deployment of SOF units tasked as *in extremis* forces provide the combatant commander with capabilities that are culturally and politically aware of the AOR and speak indigenous languages. They bring unique skills such as the ability to conduct counter-proliferation of WMD and can execute rapid strikes to seize or interdict personnel and infrastructure.

These SOF operators would be the core constituency of the JSOTF staffs as they rotate in and out of tactical and operational assignments. Moreover, the JSOTFs would feed their COP to the regionally apportioned SOF organizations, establishing a battle rhythm link between tactical and operational echelons. In essence there would be no “begin state” because the tactical, operational, and strategic levels would maintain a synchronized situational awareness. The individual SOF units would be able to “see” beyond the tangible and into the realm of the virtual by receiving focused COP feeds, allowing them to make better informed tactical decisions that support the commander’s intent. In turn, these tactical forces would feed human intelligence and other collection media to the higher echelon COP.

The titles “global scout” and “ambassador” are unique to SOF operators because of their ability to insert themselves with deference and respect into alien cultures. US CENTCOM relies on SOF as a part of its engagement strategy to “get the command’s foot in

²⁸ “Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT),” 11 November 2002, <<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/dod/soccent.htm>> [10 January 2003].

the door,”²⁹ or open up nations to US influence by creating long-term counterpart relationships with important military and political leaders. In 1999 alone, SOF conducted 15 joint and combined exercises for training (JCET) and participated in eight Joint Chiefs of Staff-led exercises in 15 countries, or over half the nations in the AOR. Nowhere has this strategy been more effective than in the former soviet central Asian republics, which had engaged in numerous JCETs with SOF prior to the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. Without this begin state shaping, US CENTCOM most likely would have faced great challenges in gaining access to Afghanistan. It is clear that regionally oriented and highly skilled SOF operators, directed and led by staffs and commanders with similar skills who are culled from their own ranks and intensively trained in operational art are the critical link to ensuring the combatant commander’s theater strategic objectives are understood and executed by operational and tactical organizations.

Conclusion

The assertion that the world changed on 11 September 2001 is overly simplistic and ignores both the evolutionary and revolutionary effects already impacting the US military prior to the attacks. Combatant commands were already losing ground in their battles to keep pace with the slow seep of external bureaucratic pressure and the more dynamic influences of information technology proliferation in a dangerous and fragmented security environment.

The asymmetric nature of terrorist groups and rogue states who can gain access to military power far beyond their conventional means negates the overwhelming advantage enjoyed by the US for a brief spell in the 1990’s after the collapse of the former Soviet

²⁹ Ibid.

Union. Over-reliance on high-technology weaponry and electronic intelligence collection equipment, while an effective array of capabilities to counter major theater wars, has diminished our ability to engage and decisively defeat organizations whose only critical vulnerability is the people who belong to them.

Present and future success is predicated on the requirement to adapt non-materiel solutions to maximize the effectiveness of our technological and manpower dominance. The time has come to break down long-standing bureaucratic friction points and expunge the “because that is the way we’ve always done it” mentality from the military establishment. While we have radically altered operational warfare through sound doctrine, superb training, and unmatched materiel, we still cling to the same staff model created to wage war on a two-dimensional battlefield.

The time has come to complete the operational warfare revolution and create focused, professional battle staffs that are masters of operational art and the tools required to make it happen. The functionally oriented staff that can seamlessly integrate all levels of war will dominate the dimension of time and force the adversary to react to our operational tempo while we deny him freedom of action. It will take care of its own, ensuring that its members are taken care of and can focus on operational responsibilities. Finally, it will chart the course for the future, creating accurate templates of the threat and tailoring forces and materiel to counter it.

The Global War on Terror presents new challenges to the combatant commanders on top of their traditional roles and missions. The task organization presented in this study enhances the combatant command’s ability to prosecute legacy tasks such as major theater war while revolutionizing its capability in MOOTW and SSC operations. The full

integration of SOF assets and C² into the theater engagement plan will give the operational commander the tools he requires for success – a keenly focused and aware staff (the microscope) and highly trained, capable SOF forces (the scalpel) to dominate all phases of the OODA loop.

SHAPING THE BEGIN STATE:
BUILDING A MORE RESPONSIVE COMBATANT COMMAND
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